REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application.

By this Amendment, independent claims 1 and 4 are amended, and claims 8 and 9 are added, to recite additional features disclosed in this specification at, for example, Figs. 4A and 4B, and page 3, lines 8-11. Claims 2, 3 and 5-7 are amended in view of the amendments to independent claims 1 and 4.

No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Office Action does not clearly indicate whether the certified copy of the priority document has been received by the Patent Office from the International Bureau. Such indication is respectfully requested in the next Office Action.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 2002-102627 to Norihiko; rejects claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over WO 03/31371 A1 to Fujita; provisionally rejects claims 1-4 and 7 on the ground of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting over Copending Application No. 10/432,983; and provisionally rejects claims 1 and 2 on the ground of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting over Copending Application No. 10/535,096. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claims 1 and 4 are amended to recite additional features, as outlined above. In particular, claim 1 is amended to recite "the first plurality of protrusion portions are not in contact with the other of the first and second adhesion surfaces." Claim 4 is amended to recite similar features. Norihiko and Fujita do not disclose or suggest these features, as recited in claims 1 and 4.

The Office Action asserts that the spacing material 13 of Norihiko (here, the porosity ceramic member 20 is banded together through the glue line 11) and the spacer 10 of Fujita respectively correspond to the protrusion portions. However, nowhere do Norihiko and Fujita

disclose "the first plurality of protrusion portions are not in contact with the other of the first and second adhesion surfaces," as recited in claim 1, and similarly recited in claim 4. In fact, although not clearly mentioned in the claims of each of the cited references, a person skilled in the art would naturally understand that both of the spacing material 13 of Norihiko and the spacer 10 of Fujita are in contact with the two pairs of the adhesion surfaces facing each other, respectively. Thus, Norihiko and Fujita do not disclose or suggest the above-quoted features recited in claim 1, and similarly recited in claim 4.

Furthermore, Norihiko and Fujita do not even suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 4. In particular, according to the features recited in claims 1 and 4, since the parts of the adhesion surface opposite to the protrusion portions absorbs more of the moisture existing in the adhesive layer (page 4, lines 4-8 of the originally filed application), adhesive strength on the adhesion surface can be enhanced. Moreover, since portions having enhanced adhesive strength are provided on both side of the adhesive surfaces alternately, the adhesive strengths of the adhesive layer of the ceramic honeycomb structure body can be enhanced. Further, development of clacks can be blocked.

On the other hand, the method of manufacturing the ceramic structure of Norihiko includes (paragraph [0014] of Norihiko):

1. forming a glue line 11 on the side surface of the porosity ceramic member 20;

2. forming the banding previously created spacing materials 13 into the glue line 11; and

3. coating other ceramic member.

Thus, the ceramic structure thus manufactured by Norihiko has a different structure from that recited in claims 1 and 4, and cannot expect an effect of blocking the development of the crack.

Further, Fujita describes that "adhesive material is applied to at least one surface of each space 10, and two surfaces are bonded in a state that the spacer 10 is interposed between the two adhesive surfaces" (paragraph [0043] of US 2004/108056, the English equivalent of Fujita). Accordingly, Fujita cannot achieve the effect of blocking the development of the crack.

Furthermore, Norihiko has an object of providing a ceramic structure having a superior thermal conductivity and a strength, thereby preventing occurrence of a crack. Fujita has an object of controlling the thickness range of the adhesive layer. Thus, the objects of the cited references are different from "blocking the development of the crack" disclosed in the present application.

For at least the above reasons, Norihiko and Fujita do not even suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1 and 4. Thus, Norihiko and Fujita do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1-7.

Finally, the claims of Copending Applications 10/432,983 and 10/535,096 do not recite or render obvious the subject matter recited in independent claims 1 and 4, as amended. Thus, the provisional double patenting rejections are also overcome.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections of the claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 8 and 9 are patentable at least in view of the patentability of claims 1 and 4, from which they respectively depend, as well as for additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-9 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Gang Luo
Registration No. 50,559

JAO:GL/eks

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 320850
Alexandria, Virginia 22320-4850
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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